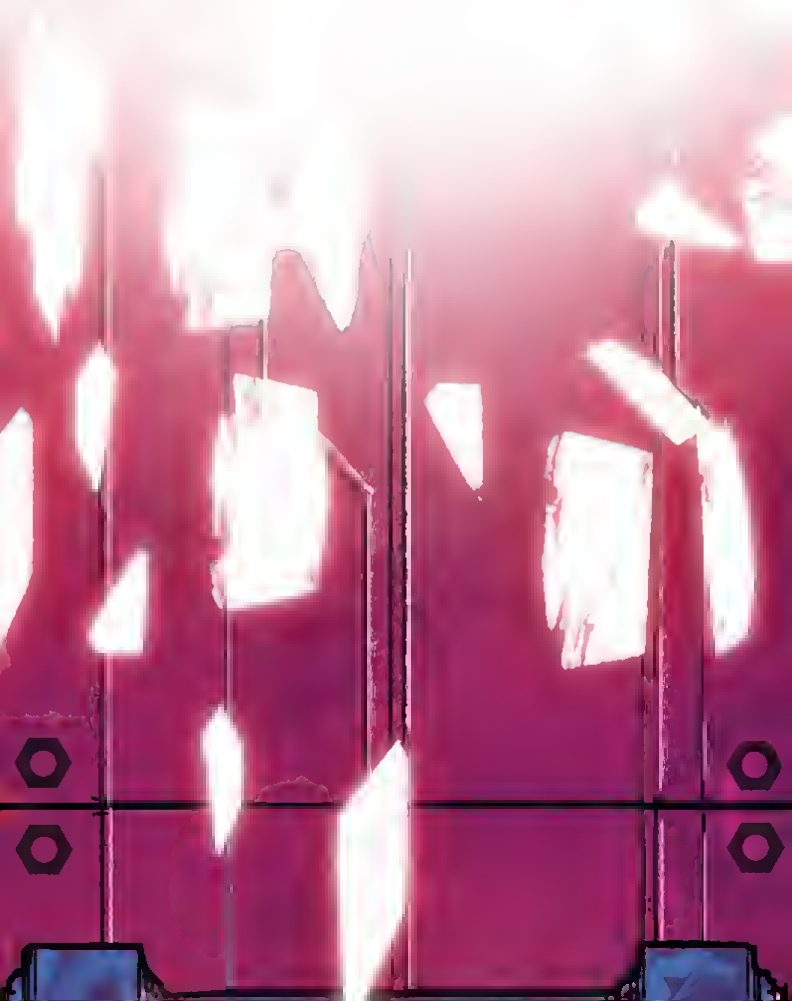
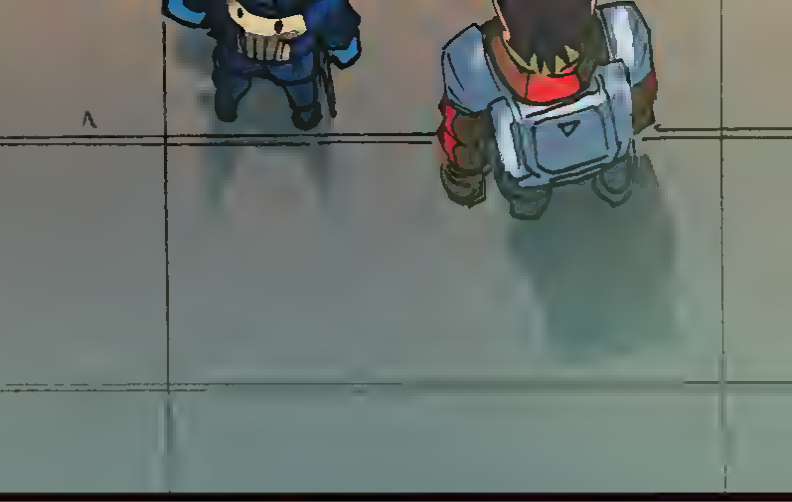
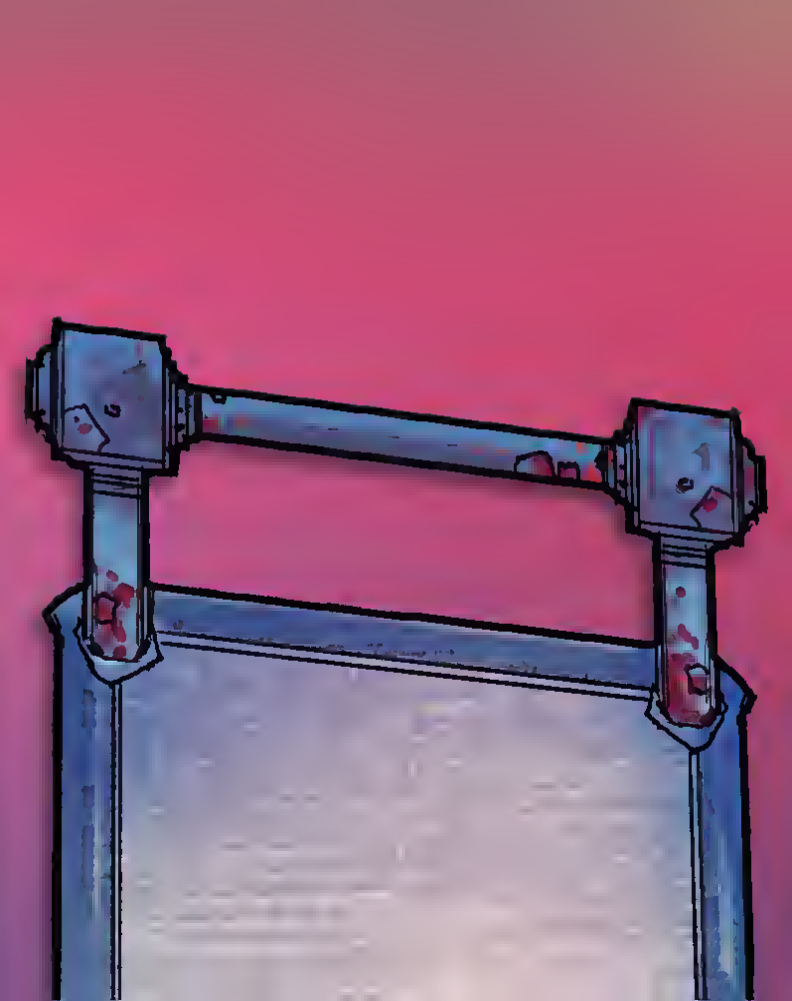






CHAPTER 16

WRITER/ARTIST/CREATOR
KARL ALTSTAETTER

COLORS
KOMIKAKI STUDIO
FEATURING KEVIN LIEW

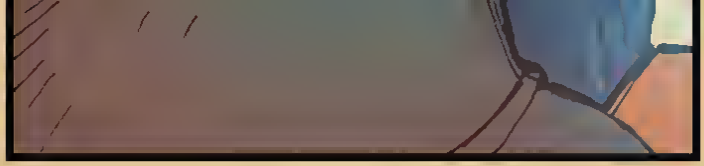
LETTERS
TAYLOR ESPOSITO

EDITOR
TOM AKEL

CITY OF GUIR.
GENERAL TOR'S WAR DEN.

WELL DONE, JARAH. YOU DELIVERED OUR GUEST, MISTER

KOR TOSK, IN ONE PIECE.



SAVE YOUR PRAISE FOR YOUR CRONIES, TOR. I'M NOT ONE OF YOUR MINDLESS BLOOD SLAVES.

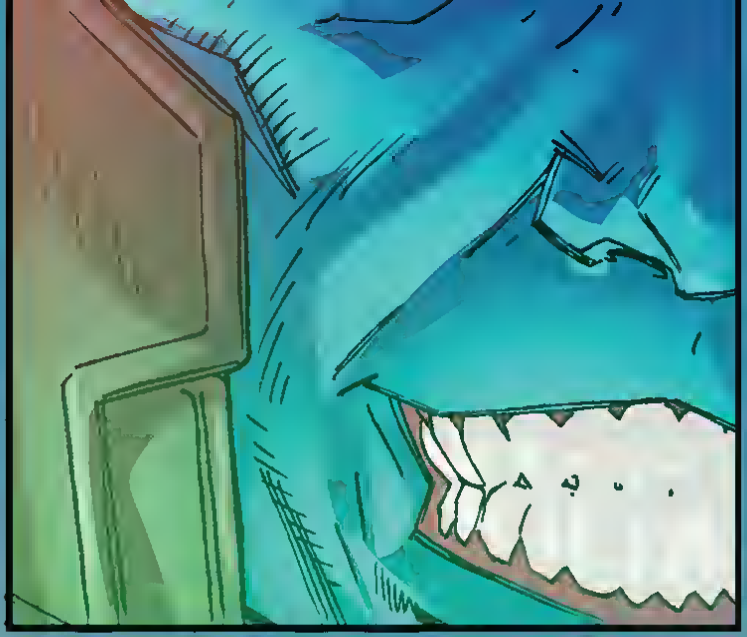
JARAH, YOUR DISRESPECT

PATIENCE...

GENERAL,
PERHAPS WE

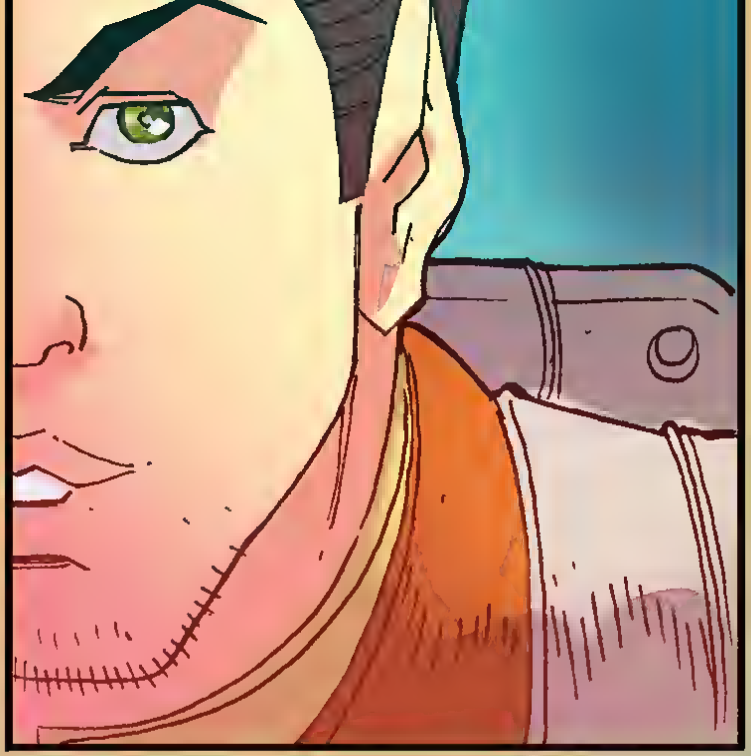
SHOULD USE THIS TIME TO MAKE OUR ARRANGEMENTS WITH MISTER KOR'TOSK?
OF COURSE... LET US DISCUSS THE TERMS OF OUR ARRANGEMENT.

ONE MILLION DRACONUS GUILD COINS. YOU WILL DELIVER THE CARGO AND TEN OF MY ELITE WARRIORS TO KARTANETH. OPERATING WITH THE UTMOST DISCRETION.



Hmmm. DISCREET, HIGH VALUE TRANSPORT, DELIVERY THROUGH VARIOUS TRIBAL LANDS. SOUNDS RISKY. THERE MIGHT BE OTHERS INTERESTED IN INTERCEPTING YOUR PRECIOUS "CARGO", NOT TO MENTION NO SMUGGLER IN HIS RIGHT MIND WANTS TO TAKE A JOB FROM YOU. LET'S JUST SAY YOUR REPUTATION FOR KILLING OFF YOUR BUSINESS ASSOCIATES IS WELL KNOWN.

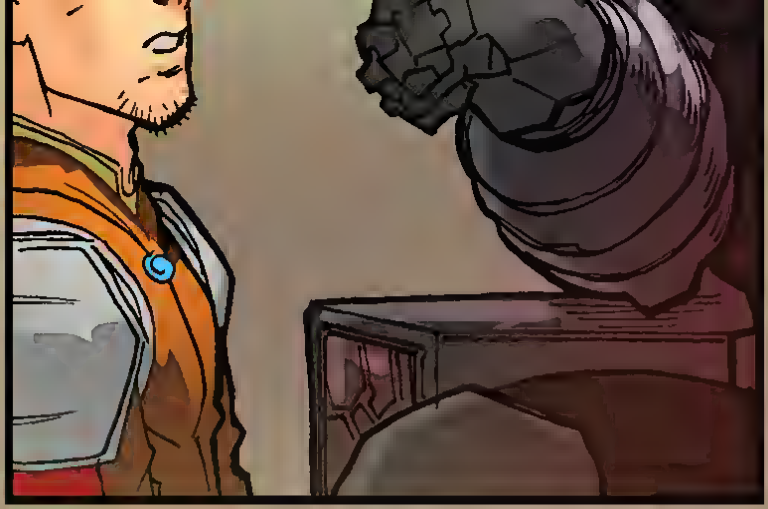
SO I MUST HAVE HEARD YOU WRONG. YOU MUST HAVE MEANT FOUR MILLION. UPFRONT.



HA
HAHA
HA!

I LIKE YOU, KOR'TOSK. YOU WEAR "EVOLVED" SKIN LIKE A DISGUISE, BUT YOU NEGOTIATE LIKE A TRUE TAR'KEN. IF YOU HAD ACCEPTED MY FIRST OFFER I WOULD HAVE BEEN CONCERNED AND DISAPPOINTED. A SMUGGLER

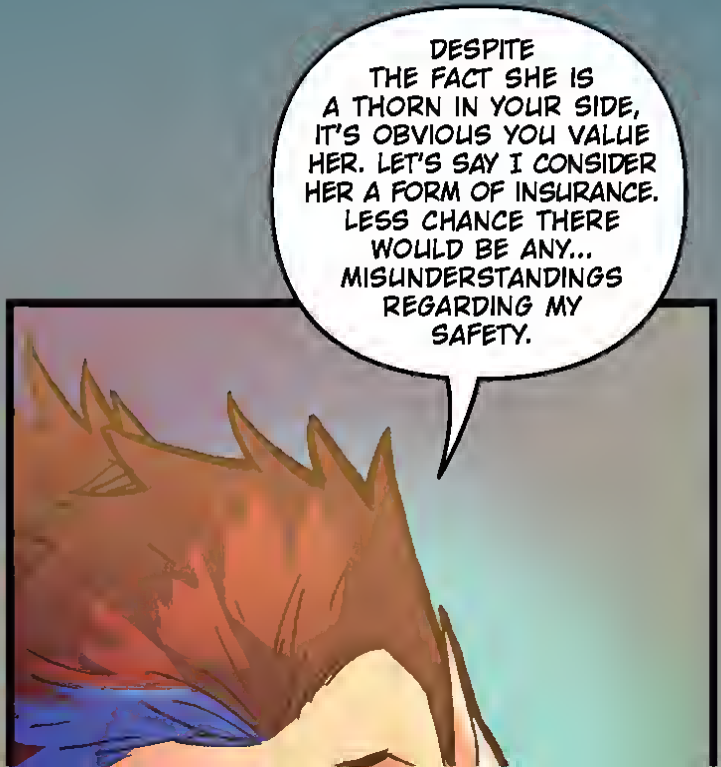
IS NO PROFESSION FOR A TAR'KEN BUT YOU APPROACH IT LIKE A WARRIOR. I'LL SPARE YOUR LIFE AND COUNTER OFFER.
TWO MILLION. HALF NOW. HALF ON DELIVERY.



AND THE WOMAN COMES ON THE TRIP.
HER?
ME?

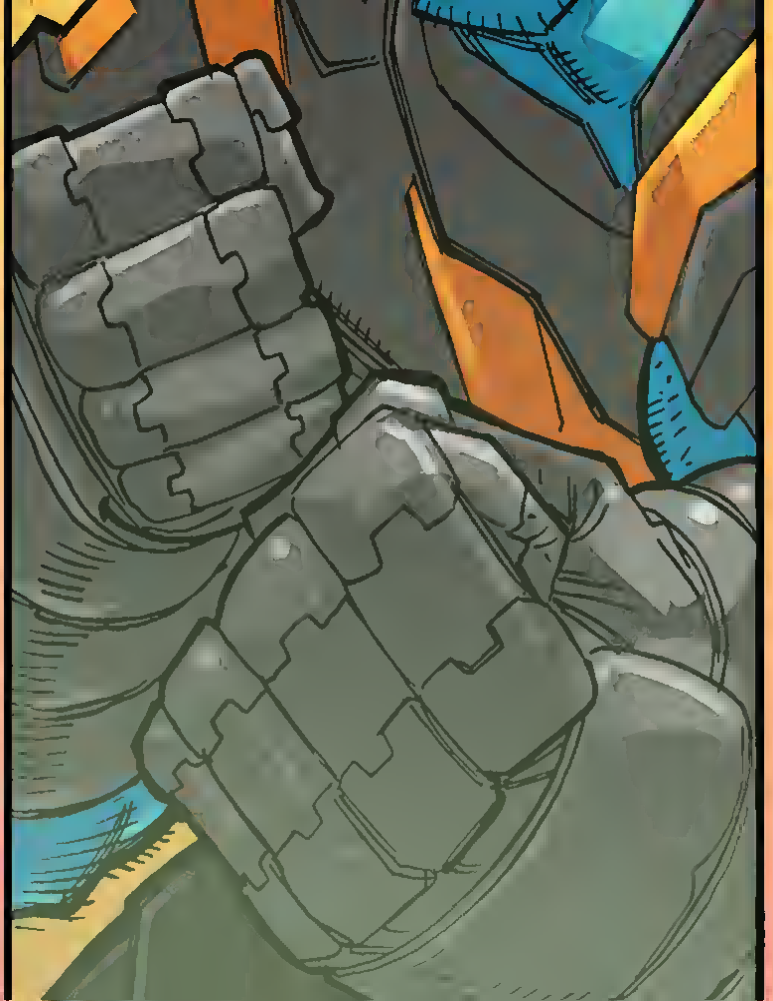
JARAH? CHOOSE YOUR WORDS WISELY, KOR'TOSK. IF THEY DISPLEASE ME MY MEN WILL CUT OFF YOUR HEAD AND FEED IT TO MY WAR DOGS.

GRRRR...


DESPITE THE FACT SHE IS A THORN IN YOUR SIDE, IT'S OBVIOUS YOU VALUE HER. LET'S SAY I CONSIDER HER A FORM OF INSURANCE. LESS CHANCE THERE WOULD BE ANY... MISUNDERSTANDINGS REGARDING MY SAFETY.

GRRRR...
VERY WELL!
JARAH WILL

ACCOMPANY THE CARGO.



WHAT!

I'M NOBODY'S INSURANCE POLICY OR BARGAINING CHIP. I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE WITH THIS TWO-BIT

SMUGGLER.

SORRY, LADY. IT'S YOU OR NO DEAL. I'VE GOT TO COVER MY EXPOSURE ON THIS. NOTHING PERSONAL.

JARAH. NO MORE DISCUSSION. YOU WILL ESCORT THE CARGO!
YOU'RE BE AS I SAY!

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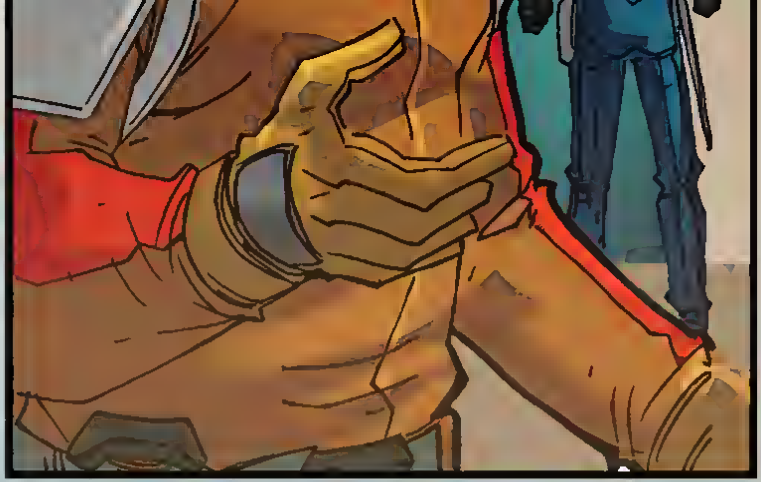
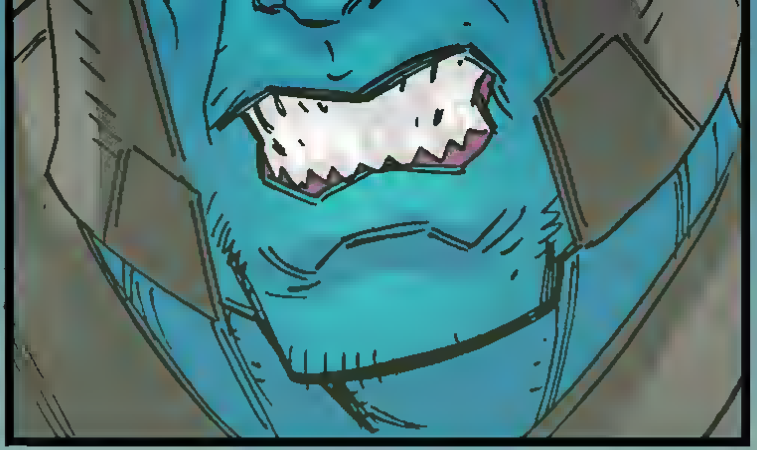
ᚠᛜᚢ ᚠᛜ ᛏᛜ
ᚺᛇᚱᚱ!

DO WE HAVE A DEAL, GENERAL TOR?



Grrr.
YES!



HAVE THE CARGO READY AT MIDNIGHT ALONG WITH MY PAYMENT. I'D LIKE TO BE ON MY WAY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

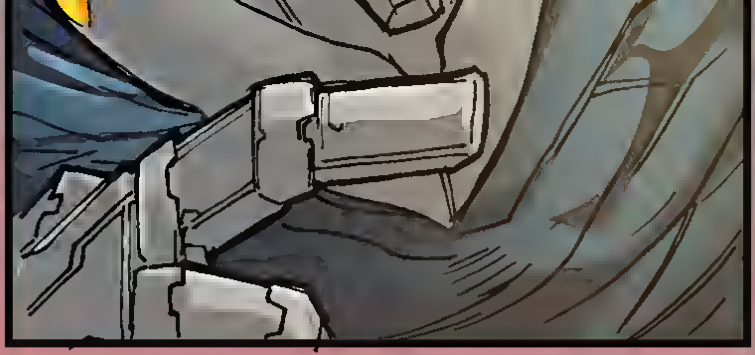
GRRRR...
GUARD! ESCORT MISTER KOR'TOSK TO A GUEST ROOM. HE CAN WAIT THERE UNTIL HIS DEPARTURE.
EXCELLENT DOING BUSINESS WITH YOU GENERAL.
A BIT OF ADVICE, KOR'TOSK. IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO JARAH, I WILL GRIND YOUR BONES TO DUST!
AS LONG AS

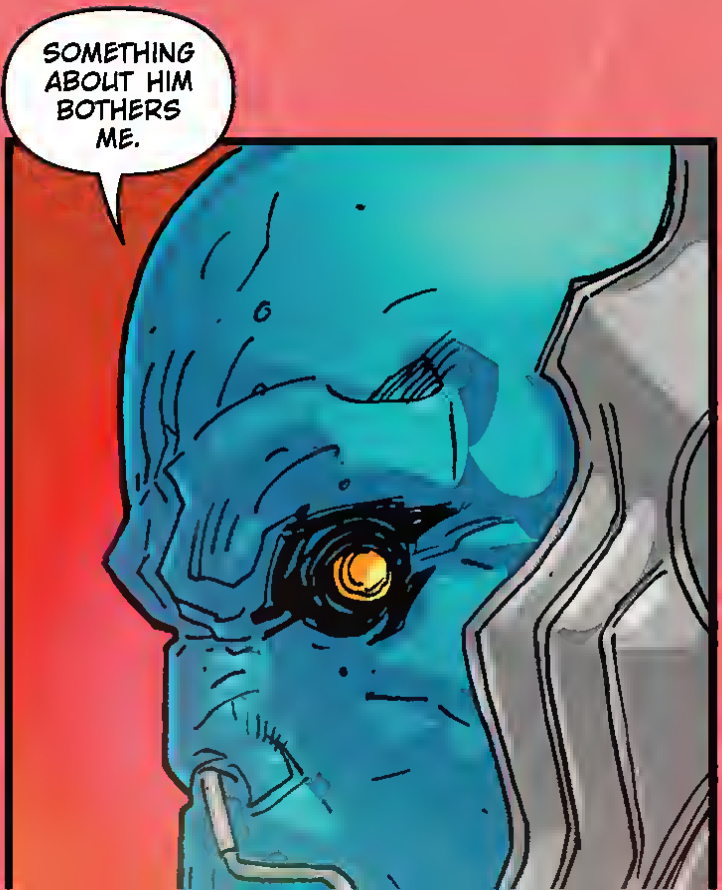
I ARRIVE SAFELY THERE SHOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM.

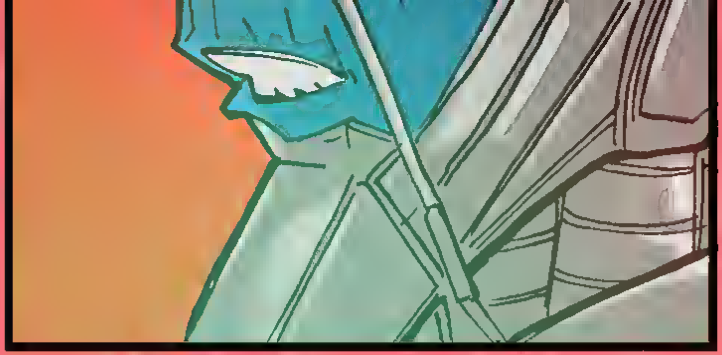
GRRR...
READY THE CARGO, LAR. I MUST SETTLE THINGS WITH JARAH.
AS YOU WISH, GENERAL.

CONTACT

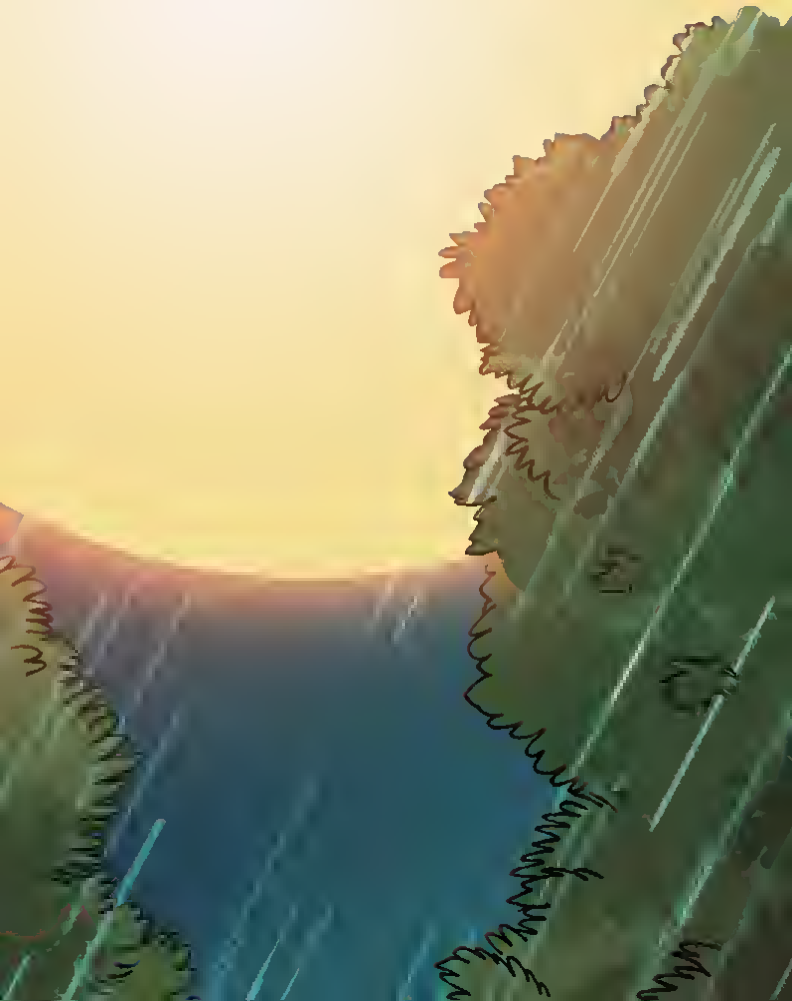
our friend at the Tar'ken Hall of Records. I want him to find out everything he can on Yar Kor'tosk.

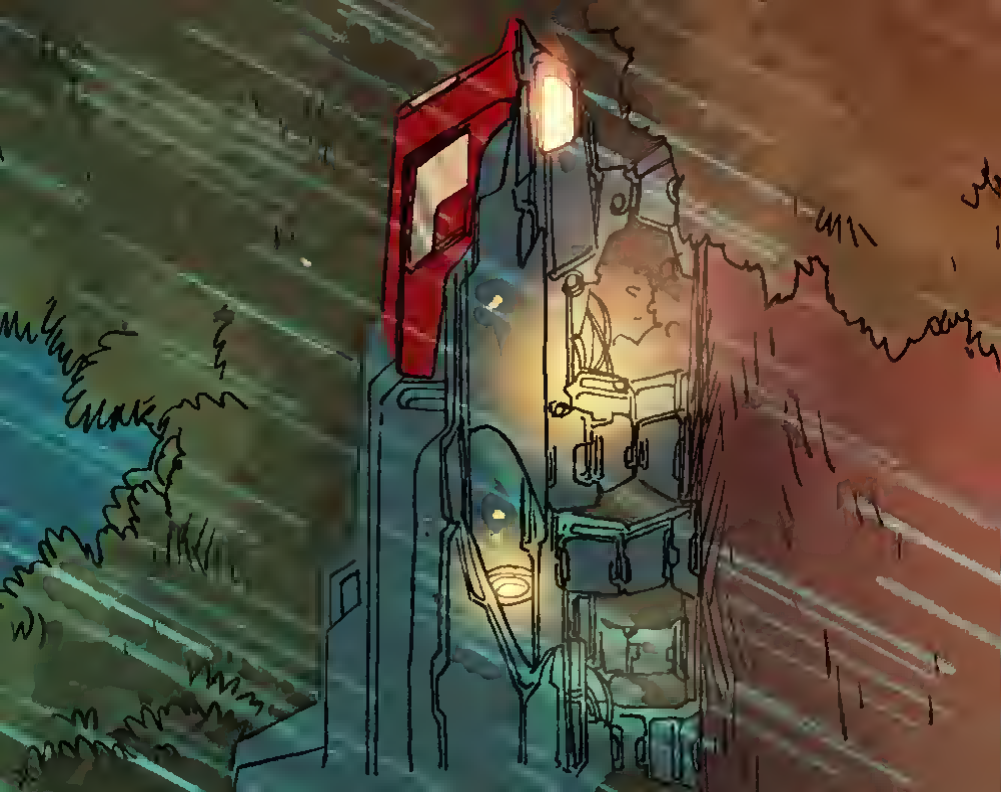


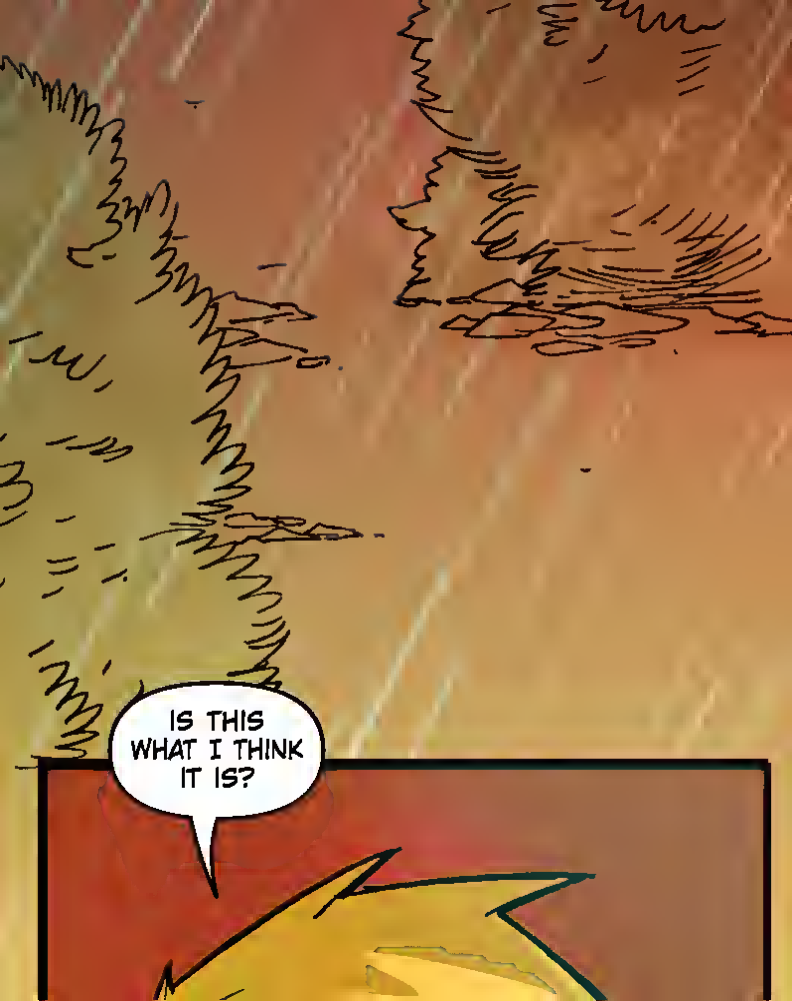

SOMETHING ABOUT HIM BOTHERS ME.

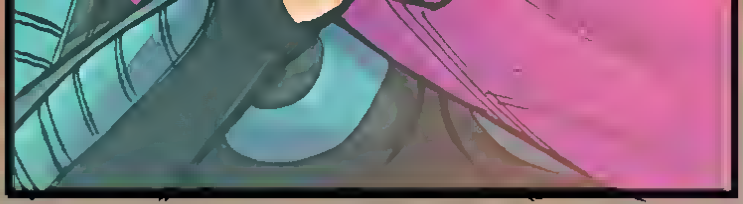


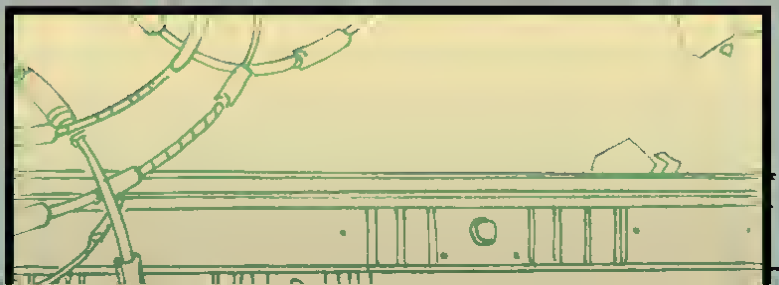
ON BOARD THE GHOST BLADE



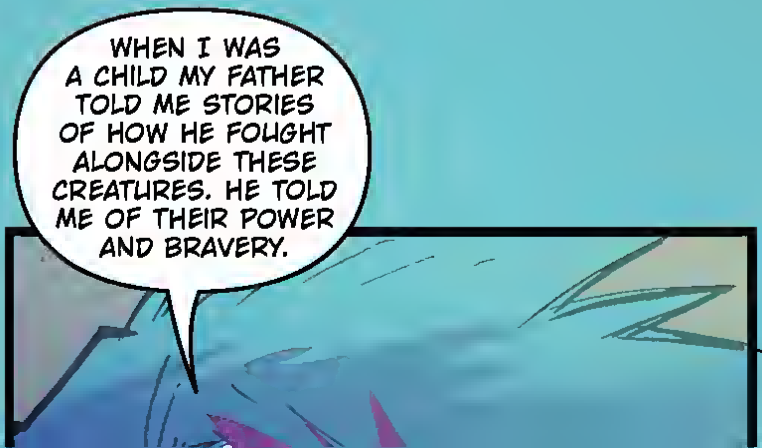


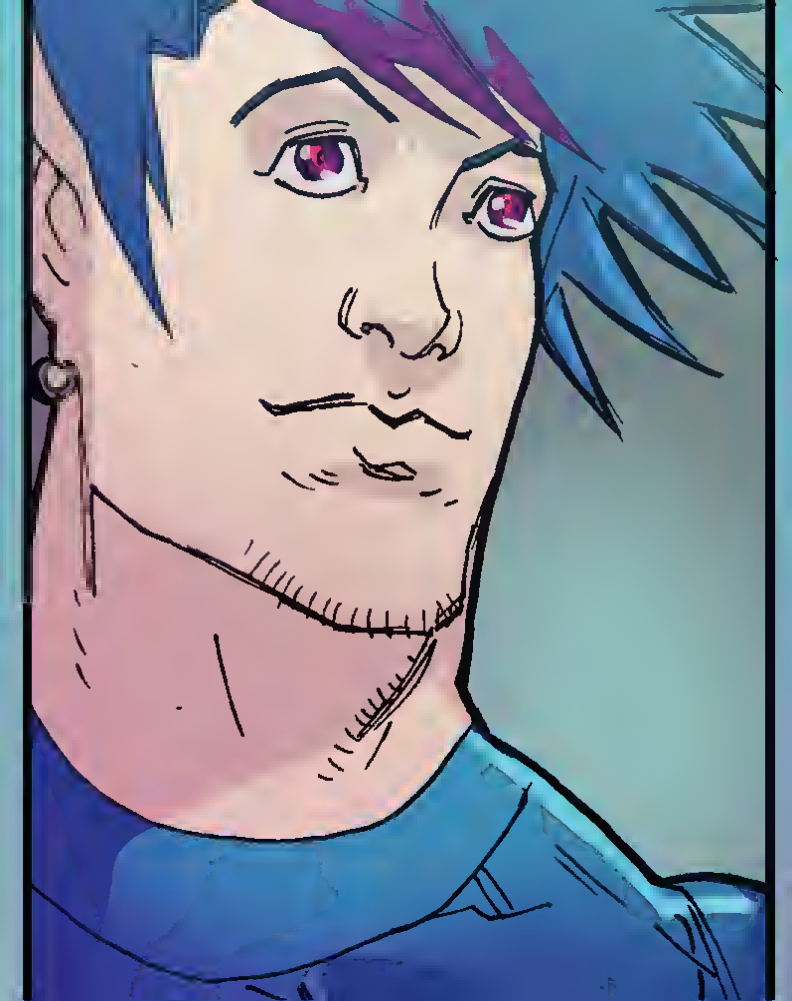

IS THIS WHAT I THINK IT IS?





IT'S A KAN UNIT. A GOLEM BATTLE MECH. THEY WERE CREATED TO FIGHT THE DRACONUS. I ASSUMED THEY WERE ALL DESTROYED IN THE PRIMAL WARS. THIS ONE LOOKS PERFECTLY PRESERVED IN CRYO.


WHEN I WAS A CHILD MY FATHER TOLD ME STORIES OF HOW HE FOUGHT ALONGSIDE THESE CREATURES. HE TOLD ME OF THEIR POWER AND BRAVERY.

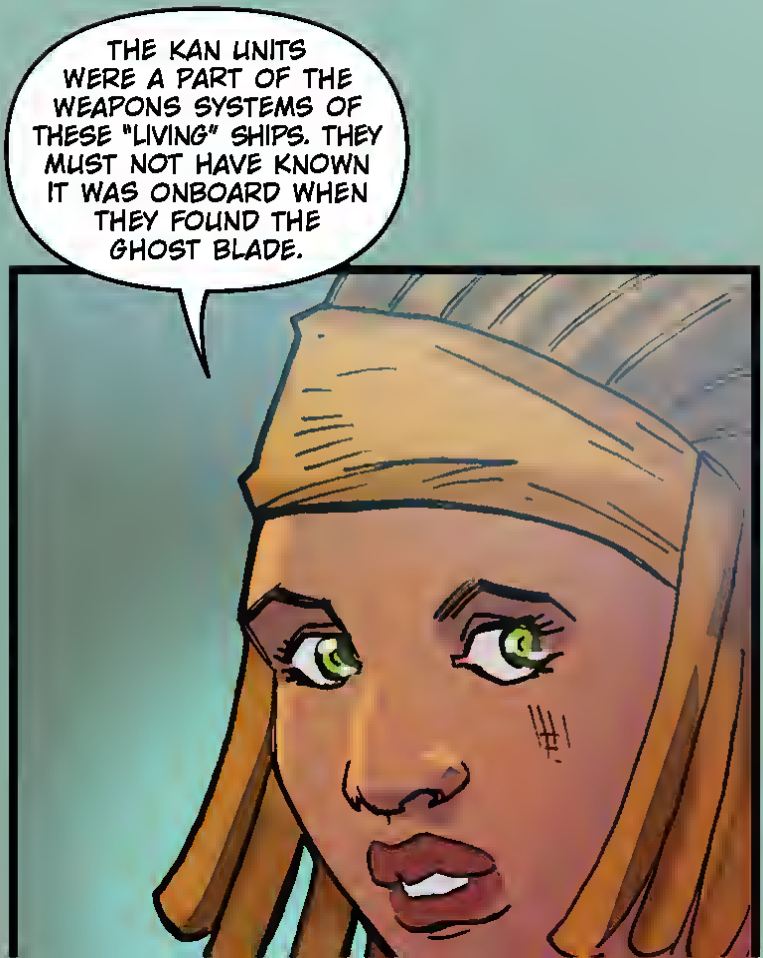


INDEED, THEY TURNED THE TIDE OF THE WAR. THEY ARE NEARLY INVULNERABLE AND PROGRAMMED TO BE

AND PROGRAMMED TO BE RELENTLESS AND DESTRUCTIVE. I'M NOT CONVINCED IT'S BRAVERY AS MUCH AS IT'S IN THEIR NATURE TO HAVE NO FEAR. ITS PRESENCE HERE CONCERNS ME.

HOW

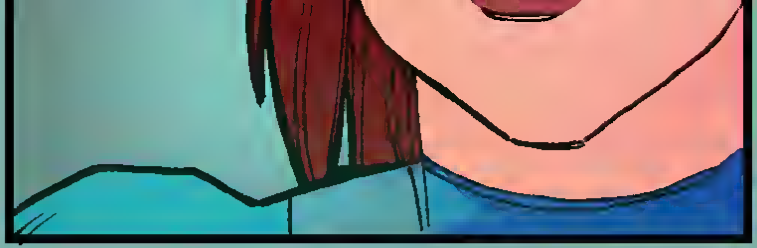
DID IT GET ONBOARD OUR SHIP?

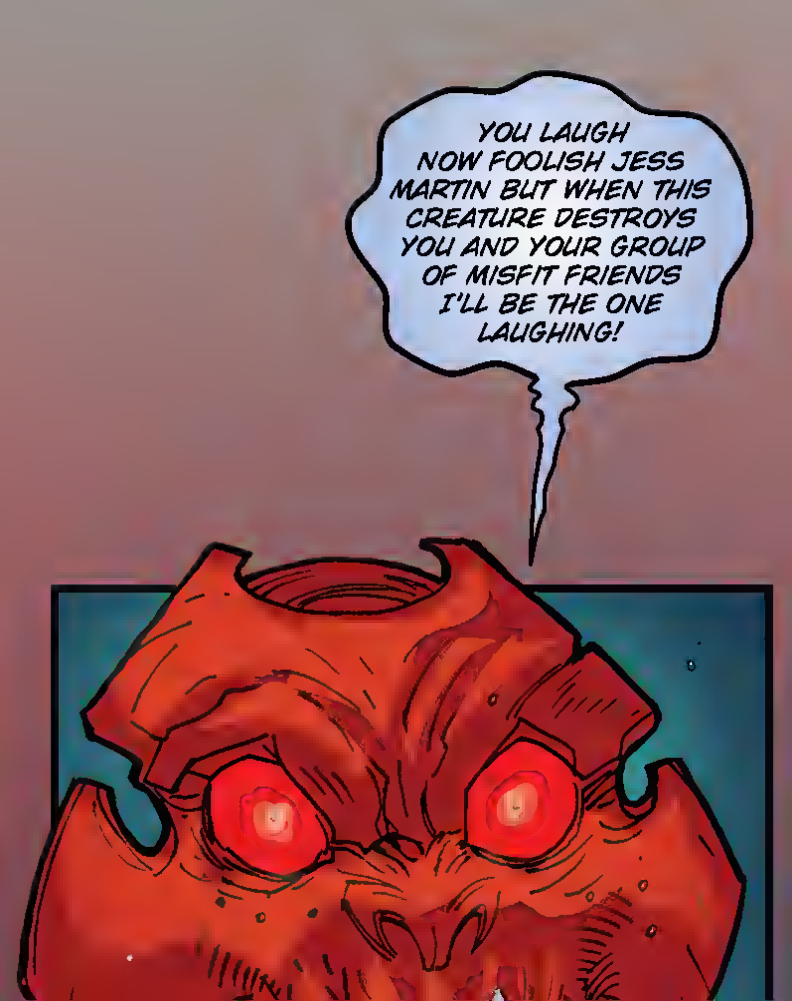

THE KAN UNITS WERE A PART OF THE WEAPONS SYSTEMS OF THESE "LIVING" SHIPS. THEY MUST NOT HAVE KNOWN IT WAS ONBOARD WHEN THEY FOUND THE GHOST BLADE.

OR MAYBE THEY DID? THEY MIGHT HAVE WANTED US TO HAVE IT. EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON.

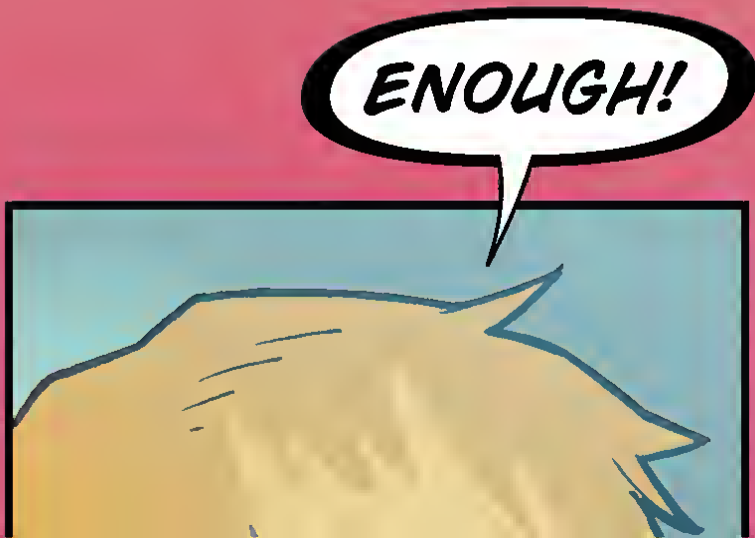
THE STENCH OF THIS KAN UNIT FILLS THE SHIP. I CRUSHED AND TORE MANY OF THEM APART IN MY DAY. THEY ARE AN ABOMINATION AND A PLAGUE UPON MIRROR. I CURSE THE DAY THEY WERE CREATED. YOU FEAR THE DRACONUS BUT IMAGINE A WORLD CONTROLLED BY THESE SOULLESS KILLERS. LET ME DRINK ITS BLOOD AND THEN WE SHOULD LAUNCH IT FROM THE AIRLOCK, IN PIECES!

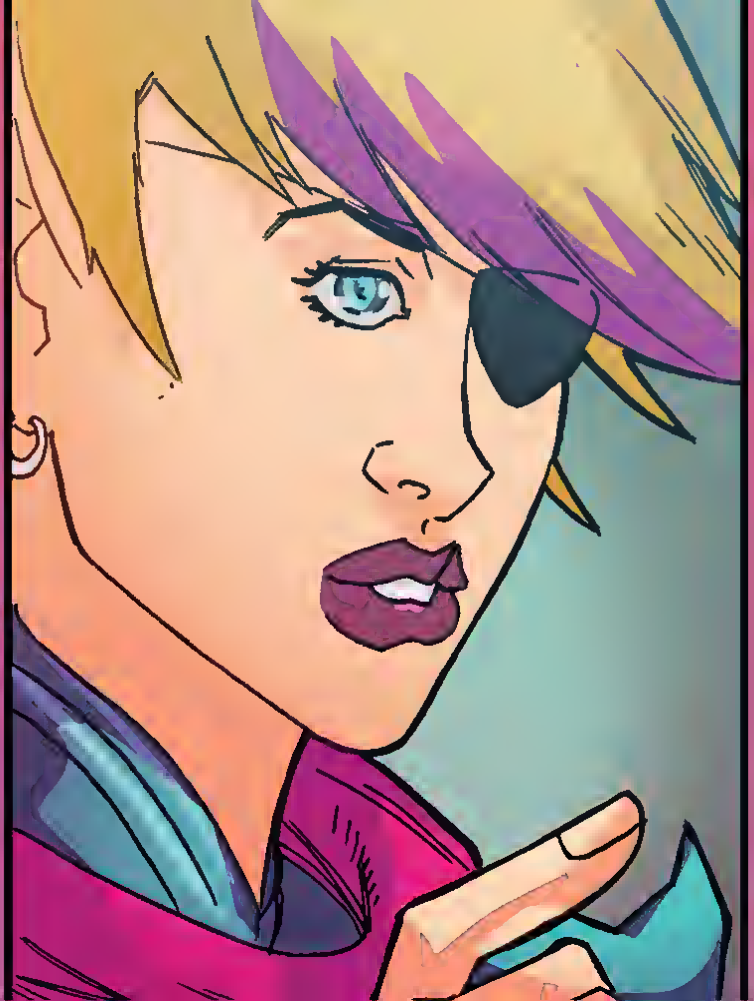
TELL US HOW YOU REALLY FEEL, D'TOOTH.

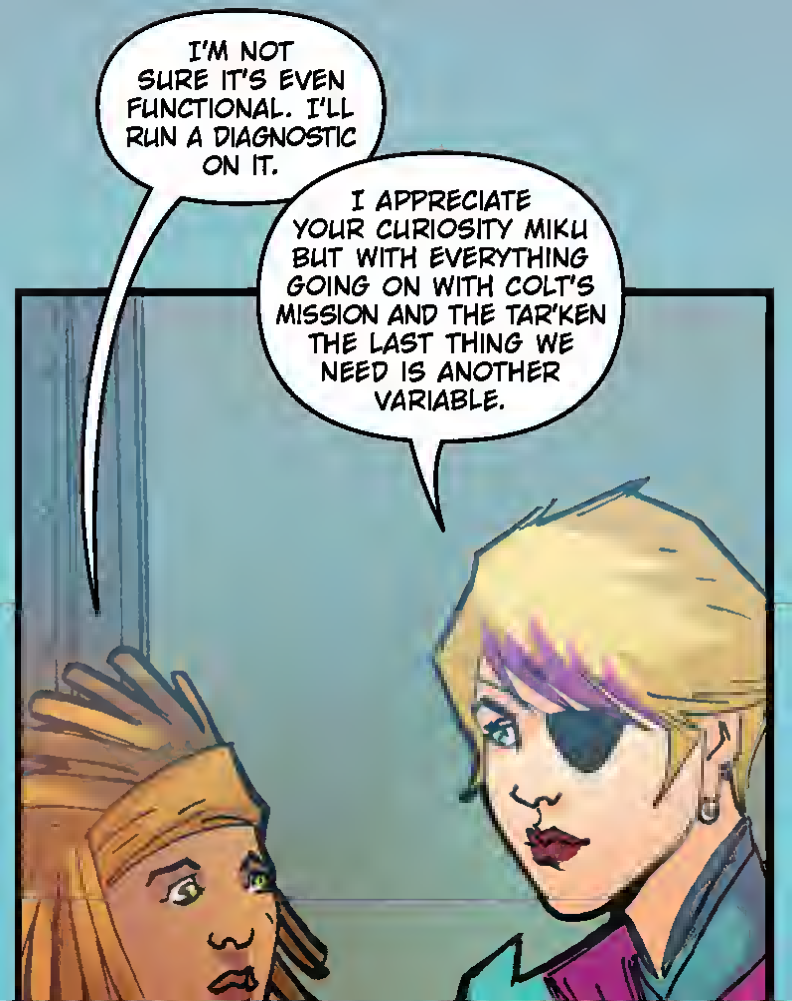


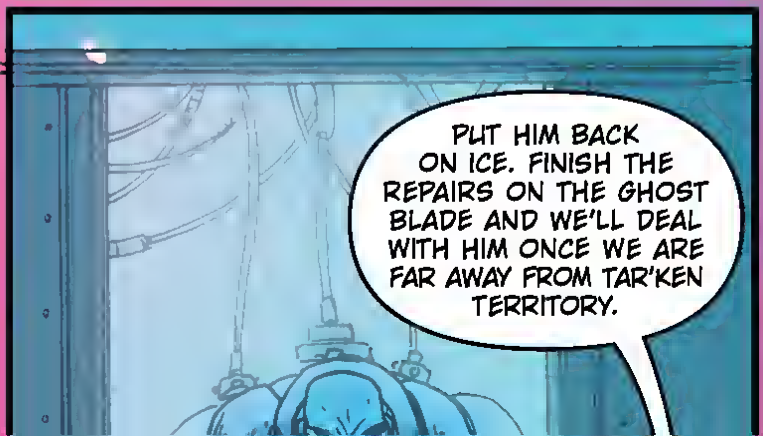

YOU LAUGH NOW FOOLISH JESS MARTIN BUT WHEN THIS CREATURE DESTROYS YOU AND YOUR GROUP OF MISFIT FRIENDS I'LL BE THE ONE LAUGHING!

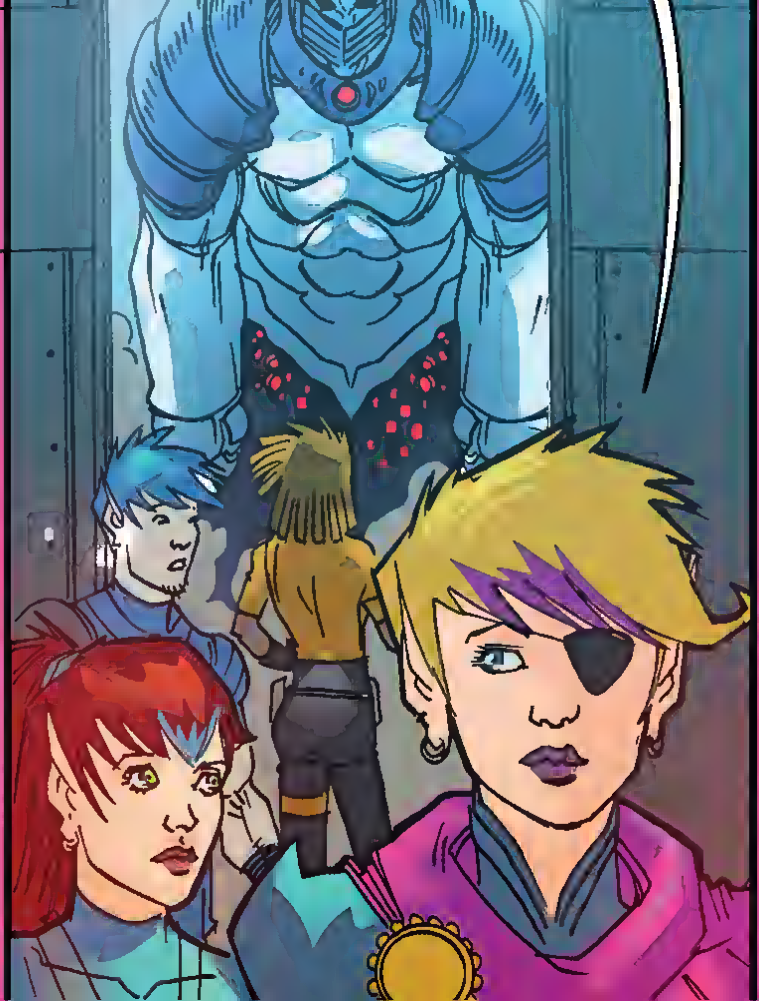
YOU SHOULD INCLUDE YOURSELF IN THE "MISFIT FRIENDS" CATEGORY.
I AM NOT A FRIEND. I AM A PRISONER!

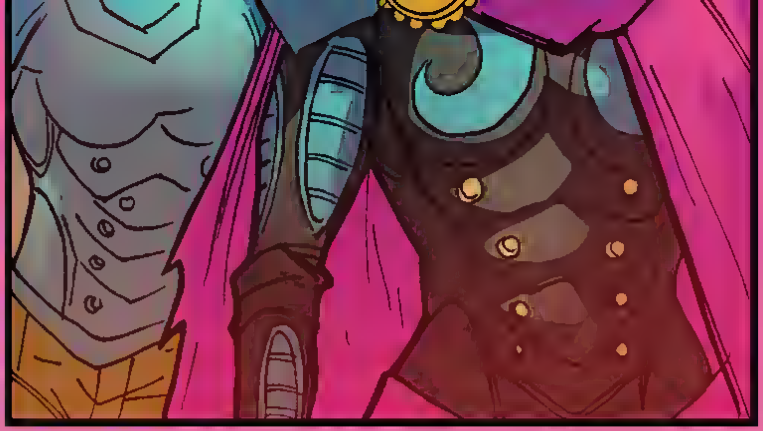

ENOUGH!




I'M NOT SURE IT'S EVEN FUNCTIONAL. I'LL RUN A DIAGNOSTIC ON IT.
I APPRECIATE YOUR CURIOSITY MIKU BUT WITH EVERYTHING GOING ON WITH COLT'S MISSION AND THE TAR'KEN THE LAST THING WE NEED IS ANOTHER VARIABLE.


PUT HIM BACK ON ICE. FINISH THE REPAIRS ON THE GHOST BLADE AND WE'LL DEAL WITH HIM ONCE WE ARE FAR AWAY FROM TAR'KEN TERRITORY.





ANYTHING GOING ON IN THERE BIG GUY?

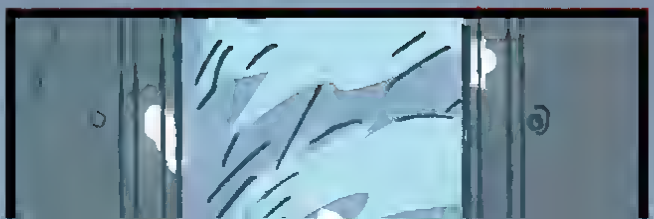
KLIK
KLIK

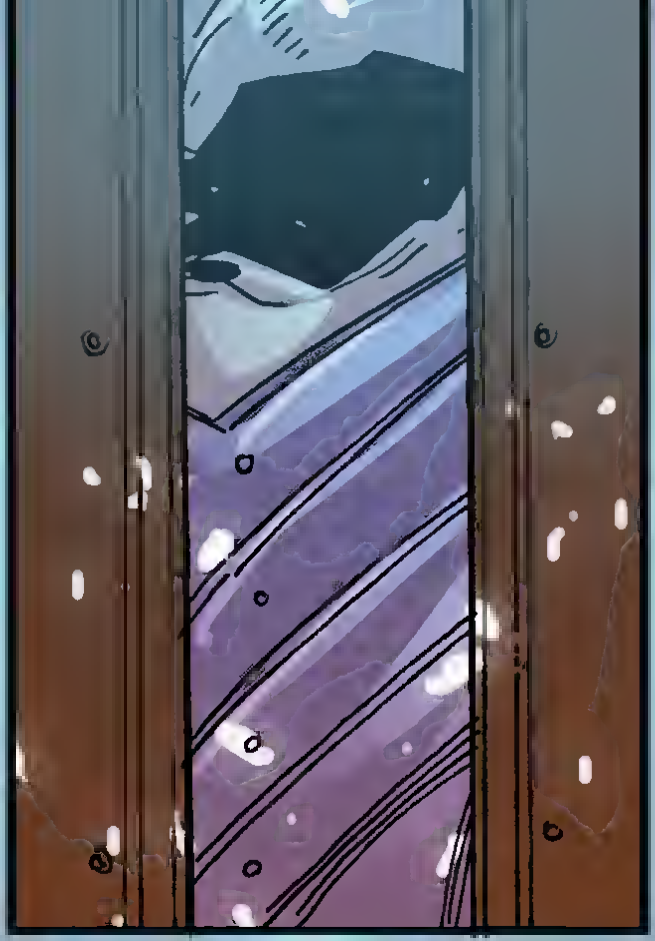
CHUK-

BOOM

SMOOCH
GOODNIGHT AND SWEET DREAMS BIG

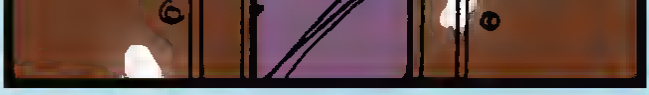
GUY.


BOOM



BOOM

BOOM



BOOM

NEXT EPISODE: LORDS OF TAR'KEN PART 04